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6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

September 20, 2006

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
C/O
Embassy of the Holy See
3339 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Sir,

Much has been made of your decision to quote 14th century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus during a recent speech in Germany. I hope that you will resist calls to apologize for these statements – as they accurately describe the motivation of radical Islamists who replace the political and religious pluralism of the western world with a modern-day caliphate.

As you correctly noted during your speech, Emperor Manuel criticized Islam saying “...Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.” The statement has prompted outrage and indignation in some quarters.

It is not surprising that your statements prompted such a visceral reaction in much of the Islamic world, where the free exercise of religion is largely proscribed. Conversion from Islam to any other religion is illegal. Punishment is swift and severe – in some cases death.

Like you, I believe any reformation of the Islamic faith is highly unlikely because it would require a radical reinterpretation of the Koran, something that you have correctly noted would be nearly impossible as Muslims view the Koran as a document that cannot be interpreted by man. This is especially troubling when considering some of the passages contained in the Koran.

- “Fight those who believe not in Allah...nor acknowledge the religion of truth, [even if they are] the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) until they pay with willing submission and feel themselves subdued.” (The Koran 9:29)
- “Slay the idolaters wherever you find them.” (The Koran 9:5)

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- “I will inspire terror in the hearts of Unbelievers: you smite them above their necks and smite all their fingertips off them.” (The Koran 8:2)
- “Allah purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs in return is the garden of paradise: They fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: A promise binding on Him in truth.” (The Koran 9:111)

Al Qaeda echoed these troubling sentiments in a “rebuttal” to your speech earlier this week. They said, *“You and the West are doomed... We will break up the cross, spill the liquor and impose head tax (on no- Muslims), and then the only thing acceptable is a conversion (to Islam) or (death by) the sword.”* Ironically, the “rebuttal” does little more than vindicate the criticism you raised last week.

Again, I hope you will resist calls from the likes of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Al Qaeda to apologize for the *factual* observations you cited last week. Whether we want to admit it or not, the western world is locked in a struggle against radical Islam whose practitioners and adherents are inextricably linked to terrorism. If we are to successfully defend ourselves against the desire of our enemies to impose a caliphate on the world, we must first be willing to openly identify them.

Sincerely,

Tu Tuesday

Tom Tancredo
Member of Congress